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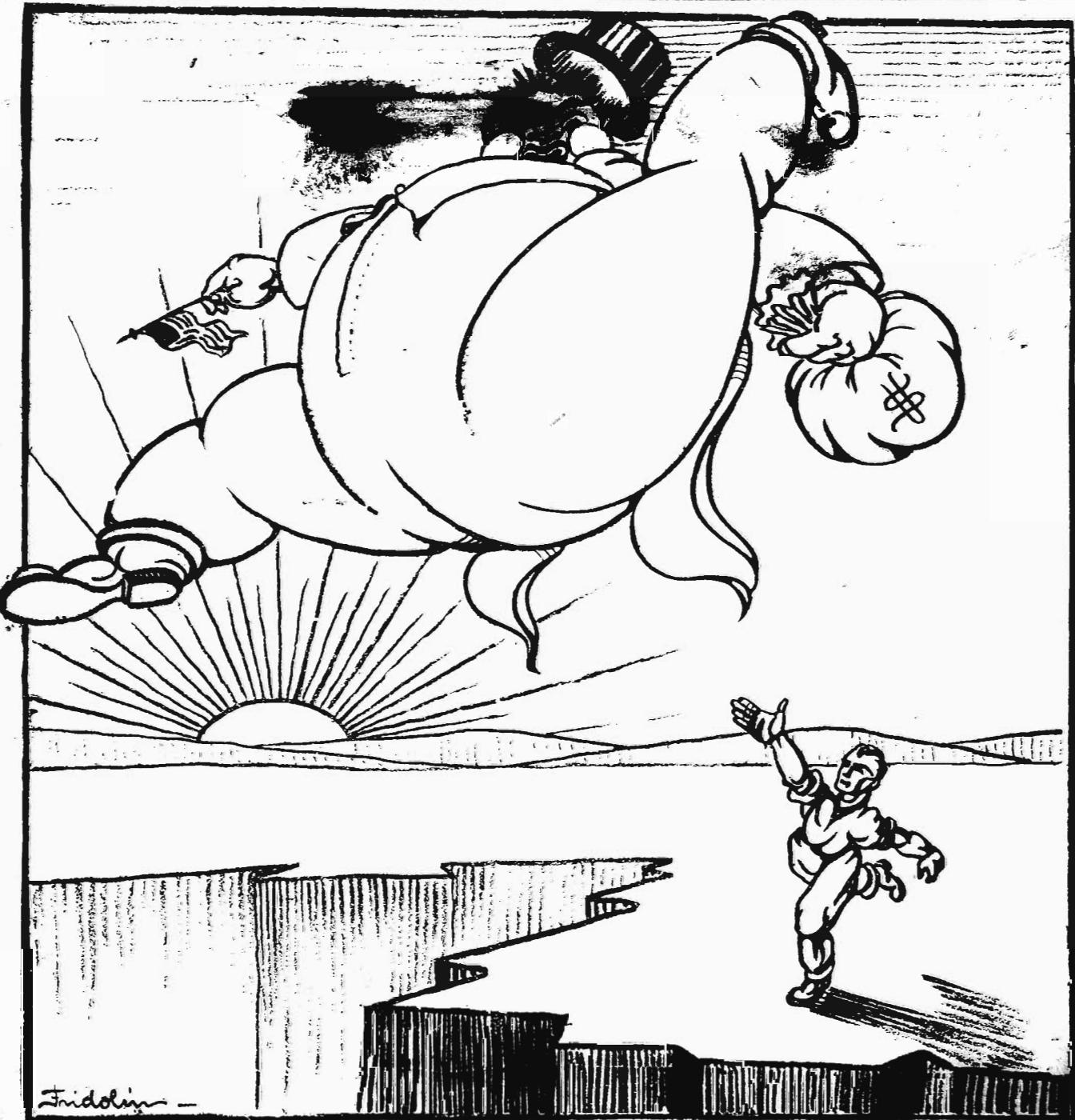
# VOICE OF LABOR

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GOOD-BYE BOSS!

# Mexico Next!

THE ink is not dry on the Peace Treaty of Versailles, and more than twenty-three wars are raging in Europe. Another war is about to break—the United States against Mexico.

The Peace Treaty gave Shantung to Japan, part of Germany—the Saar Valley, the Left Bank of the Rhine—to France; part to Poland—Silesia. It allotted Slav and Austrian territory to Italy, part of Asia Minor to France, other parts to Greece, Italy and England; Hungarian territory to Tzecho-Slovakia and Yugo-Slavia; Bulgarian land to Serbia and Greece; Russian and Hungarian territory to Rumania: etc.

To the United States it gave a free hand to "deal with" Central and South America, under the beneficent Monroe Doctrine, which forbids all Governments except the American Government from conquering and looting our little Brown Brothers.

For a nation which does not believe in Imperialism, we have made some progress toward engulfing other nations.

### *Who Said Imperialism?*

The United States marines now control elections in Panama, Nicaragua and other Central American countries; they have abolished the Government of Santo Domingo and set up a military dictatorship there; Haiti is practically American territory, and the inhabitants have to ask permission of the United States military authorities before they express their opinions. Porto Rico is part of this country: if you do not believe it, just read in the newspapers how working men are shot down on strike there. Cuba is owned by the Sugar Trust, and cannot have any foreign relations without the consent of Congress.

Mexico is next on the program. The great capitalists in this country have decided that we must invade Mexico. The reason is that the Mexican Government has decided to make all natural resources the property of the Mexican people.

"For years American and other foreign capitalists have, by fraud, bribery and other methods, seized control of valuable mines, oil fields and plantations. They have worked Mexican labor terrible hours at starvation wages. They have insisted upon enormous profits, because of the "unsettled conditions" there—and when the conditions actually became "unsettled" enough to cut down their profits, they have squealed for help to the American Government.

Up to the War, their plans were halted. But under cover of the War, the American and British capitalists resumed the assault; and the Government backed them up.

### *Backing up the Looters*

Our State Department protested against the taxes which the Mexican Congress put upon the oil-wells. Because Mexico refused to go to war with the Allies, the Mexican Government was called "pro-German," and not allowed to send a delegate to the Peace Conference. *But the private capitalists who own the oil-fields in Mexico were allowed to go to Paris and*

*present their claims.* And at the same time, a "revolution" against the Carranza Government was financed in Wall Street, and launched from New York. . . .

The campaign is now in full swing. All the great capitalist newspapers are playing up the occasional and isolated cases of banditry in the wilder regions of Mexico as an excuse for intervention.

It is true that several American citizens, who ventured beyond the borders of that part of the country controlled by the Mexican Government, have been killed. But in some parts of our South-west, Mexicans are killed like dogs—and in a land where "law-and-order" are supposed to govern.

But more than that. Americans go into Mexico and kill the people. In the great strike at Cananea, in Northern Mexico, the American mine-owners imported American thugs armed with rifles, who butchered strikers on the streets until the gutters ran with blood.

We are willing to bet that in the same time that these few Americans were killed in Mexico, *twice as many* Mexicans were killed in the United States, without compensation to the families of the victims, or punishment of the murderers.

### *Why They Want to Invade Mexico*

But these killings of Americans by bandits are only a pretext. American capitalists do not object to a few murders. They never turned a hair when the Negroes were killed on the streets of Washington and Chicago, or when the strikers at Argo, Illinois, were shot down by the Corn Products Company's armed guards.

But the army is coming home from France, and there are no jobs to give the soldiers. Why not send them to take Mexico? And the munition-works are closing down. Why not scare up a new war, which will lead to further profits for the munition-makers? American Labor is getting restive, and the foreign-born workers here are streaming back to their own countries; but Mexico has a mass of cheap Labor, which can be imported to break strikes.

Moreover, Mexico is one of the richest countries in the world, and the Mexicans are showing a disposition to hold on to their own property.

### *Why Labor Should Oppose Intervention*

If the American capitalists take Mexico, American workers will do the fighting and dying, American workers will pay for the war, and the capitalists will pocket the profits. Will the conquest of Mexico mean more jobs for American workers? No, it will probably mean less, for many industries will be very glad to move across the Border, where Labor will be cheap—as it is in Porto Rico—and the military will see to it that there are *no Unions*.

We hold no brief for the Mexican Government. It is not a Workers' Government. But the conquest of Mexico for Standard Oil and the Guggenheims will mean the enslavement of a great people of workers, who will be used by the interests to still further depress the living conditions of Labor of this country.

# Actors on Strike

By Eadmonn MacAlpine

BROADWAY has long been famous for its unusual happenings, and the Actors' Strike is no exception. To the general public the actor and the actress have always been beings apart from the rest of the world—stars who received fabulous salaries, or "hams" who were always on the bum. Consequently the appearance of over 90 per cent. of the actors on strike caused a sensation. The announcement in the press that certain theatres were closed on account of the strike was at first taken as a joke, a kind of press-agent stunt, like the loss of some musical comedy star's jewels.

But when the actors and actresses flocked down to the struck theatres in hundreds for the purposes of picketing, the public became intelligently interested. On the first night of the strike, the picket lines were rather disordered affairs. Groups of well dressed men and women simply blocked up the theatre entrances and engaged in friendly argument with non-striking players. The arguments became general, and in the majority of cases the public was much more interested in hearing the various sides of the case, than in attending the play. As usual the police were posted outside the doors, but everything was so pleasant, so much goodhumored banter floated around and everybody seemed so much at ease, that the cops did nothing but hang about and look sheepish.

Occasionally a sergeant would break up a group with a "Here now, move along!" but everybody looked so surprised that he would enter into explanations which sounded like apologies. Immediately the group would engage the cop in argument. . . . Finally it would move a few paces and the argument would start all over again. So the cops gave it up as a bad job. In the majority of cases the strikers were successful, and amid much shoulder-patting the particular actor or actress would be brought off to sign up with the Union.

### *"The Dignity of the Profession"*

Outside a theatre on 48th Street one of the managers engaged a group in argument. He occupied the center of the crowd, and spluttered a lot about the "dignity of the profession."

"I've been in the profession for thirty years. My wife is M—, my daughter is L—. I belong to a respectable theatrical family and I am entitled to a hearing from you young people. . . ."

"Are your wife and daughter actresses?" asked one girl.

"Yes" he replied, "of course they are actresses. They're both stars, they . . ."

"Then why aren't they out on strike with the rest of us?" she said. "If they're actresses, then they're strike-breakers now. You're not an actor any more—you're a manager."

"Twenty years ago I worked twelve shows for twenty dollars a week, I employed B— ten shows for fifteen dollars a week, I know what. . . ."

"Well, we're going to make that impossible" said

a striker. "That's why you people don't like the Equity Association."

"Then why don't you get together with us and talk it over? I'll lay ten thousand dollars on the table if it can be proved that I have refused to meet the actors, but may God strike me dead if I'll ever meet Gilmore and Mordaunt (two of the leading officials of the Actors' Equity Association). Get rid of them and we can come to terms."

"I think I speak for all the actors and actresses here," said another picketter, "when I say that as soon as we find that any official doesn't represent us, we'll remove him; but until then we'll stand by the men we have appointed!" The others applauded.

At this point two other managers came along and dragged the blusterer away, fearful that he might say too much.

### *"Do You Belong to the Working Class?"*

I approached some of the women. They were very eager to talk and all began speaking at once, some giving me leaflets, others declaring that they would stay on strike until they won.

"This is a new experience to you people," I said. "I would like to ask you a few questions."

I picked out one girl, the girl who had pointed out that the manager's wife and daughter were strike-breakers.

"Do you feel that you are members of the working class?"

"Certainly we are."

"The same as the stage carpenters and the electricians?"

"Yes."

"The same as the program girls, and the call boys?"

"Yes."

"The same as the women who do the scrubbing, washing, dusting—the doormen and attendants?"

"Yes, we feel that we have the same interests as all the people who earn a living out of the theatre."

I asked the other members of the crowd if they agreed with these answers. They all agreed.

"Would you refuse to play if the stage hands went on strike in the theatre you were in?" I asked.

She hesitated a moment. "I don't quite understand. We are members of the American Federation of Labor; we would agree to do whatever was necessary—I suppose we would strike. Yes, I would strike in that case if the stage hands wanted me to."

Here there was disagreement. They agreed with the idea but they didn't understand it quite; they were of the opinion that the affiliation with the A. F. of L. covered that point.

### *"One Big Theatrical Union"*

"Do you think that the theatre should be organized into One Big Union?" I asked.

A difference of opinion again arose; some maintaining that affiliation with the A. F. of L. was the same thing, others that they couldn't be organized that way.

"Do you think that your Association should only have a say regarding hours and wages, or that it

should have control over your whole life in the theatre, over the kind of plays you act in, and so forth?"

The girl answered: "The Association would act about the wages and hours, but about the other things I don't quite get what you mean. We're engaged to play a certain part in a certain show, we agree to do that when we sign the contract. . . ."

I explained: "Sometimes the theatre is used for propaganda against the workers, against Socialism and so on. After this experience would you play in that sort of a play?"

There was considerable doubt about this. Some maintained that the Union couldn't do anything in such cases, while others maintained that it could. "I wouldn't play in that sort of a play after this strike," one man said. "We would be playing against ourselves." Turning to me he said, "In the future the actors will be a lot more interested in labor troubles, and *my sympathies are with the strikers from now on.*"

I put this same question to one of the stars, who is also a leading man in the organization. He was very much interested, catching the idea at once. "You mean that there are 'anti-Bolshevik' plays now running in New York, for instance. I have thought about that; undoubtedly the time is coming when the actors will be able to say what type of play shall be produced. We will also exercise control over indecent plays. The managers maintain that they give the public what it wants—but in reality they pander to the worst, not the best. I would like to see the theatre take its place as one of the great educational institutions of the country. We all realize the wonderful propaganda values of the theatre. I cannot say how long it will be before we are ready for such a step, but such things happen very quickly nowadays."

#### *Actors Have Been Slaves*

This same man informed me that nearly 95 per cent.

of the higher paid men and women on the stage were active in the Actors' Equity Association. "The managers talk about the dignity of the profession," he continued. "But it is our Association that is watchful of the best interests of the profession. There can be little dignity where people are kept in slavery. Of course a number of us have established ourselves, our work is known and we are fairly secure, but thousands are in a very different position. It is for them and for our own future that we are working, for in this profession, as we grow old we go down the scale."

He instanced the plight of the chorus girls in some of the biggest shows, where the management takes sixty dollars out of their wages for shoes and stockings which they must surrender one week before the show closes, and which are re-sold to the next chorus.

The present deadlock was brought about by the refusal of the managers to accept the Actors' Equity Association as the business representative of the actor. In addition the managers refuse to abide by the joint contract which was at first agreed upon.

This contract is the basis of the actors' demands. They want it as the standard contract. It provides that the actor shall rehearse for four weeks without pay (in the case of a musical play, six weeks) and that all rehearsals required after that period shall be paid at half rates. That "eight performances shall constitute a week's work, with the exception that nine performances shall so constitute a week's work in theatres where it has hitherto been the custom to give nine weekly performances. . . ." That the actor shall be entitled to two week's pay on being fired, except during the first ten days of rehearsals, when the engagement may be terminated without notice. *That the actor must pay the manager two week's pay if he quits after the rehearsals, and that in addition he must also pay the railroad fare of his successor to the point where he joins the company.*

#### *A Mirror Up To Nature*

To an outsider this contract reads as if it were all in the management's favor. The fact that the managers are trying to dodge it is the best proof of the slavish conditions under which the actor worked previously. There is nothing revolutionary about the demands of the actors, but the spirit manifested during this strike, the awakening of these professional people to a realization of their class position as workers, augers well for the future.

It has been the aspiration of the best of the profession to make the stage mirror life, "to hold as it were a mirror up to nature." Whatever may be said of their success in this respect on the stage, the actors have certainly portrayed very well the spirit of the times in which we live in their first strike.

The same forces which are pushing the workers in every industry toward Industrial Unionism, are acting upon the theatrical profession. The stage-hands, electricians and musicians came out in sympathy with the actors, and indeed, we understand that negotiations are now pending between the different crafts for a closer union. Irresistibly the logic of the class struggle drives the theatrical workers toward "Shop Committees," composed of delegates elected by all the workers in each theatre, in preparation for the day when those who do the work will take over and run the theatres, for the benefit of all the working class.



*Theatrical manager: What about the Dignity of the Profession? The first thing you know, they'll be wanting as much wages as a brick-layer!*

# The Seamen's Strike

## How They Sold Out The Firemen

By Sniper

To understand the meaning of the Seamen's Strike must go back to the beginning of the agitation which culminated in the strike. In the late fall of 1918, in fact before the ink was dry on the armistice which had halted hostilities in Europe, the war-bonus which had been given to seamen for braving the dangers of submarine-infested waters, was suddenly cut off; in spite of the fact that this bonus was supposed to continue until the signature of peace.

Now while this increased wage was being paid to the seaman, to a certain extent it prevented him from feeling the high cost of living—just as the wages of the munitions-workers kept them pacified. Immediately this bonus was taken off, however, the never-satisfied appetite of the worker for a greater share of the wealth he creates, expressed itself in a desire for more wages.

### Union Officials Keep Quiet

At this period, the silence of the officials of the Seamen's Unions, who did not even protest against the cutting off of the bonus, amounted to nothing short of treachery. If possible, their actions were worse; for whenever a member of the rank and file began to talk this idea, he was informed in double quick time that if the seamen made any kick now, the Naval Reserve would man the ships, and the merchant men would die of starvation, or meet some equally horrible fate....

This dragged along until April this year, when the Union officials who were "in good" were tipped off that there was going to be a Conference between the International officers and the shipowners; those who were not on the inside had to wait until they were told when the Conference would be held—for no two officials had the same idea about when the agreement of the previous year terminated. As a matter of fact, the shipowners terminated it when it suited their convenience—as is proven by their abolishing the bonus.

At the time of the Conference, all the Union officials were called together and consulted about what they thought the men deserved. None of these officials had asked the members in his Branch, so it was their own personal opinions that they gave—not the men's desires. These were drawn up and submitted to the shipowners, who agreed to the demands. They were then brought to the men in the various branches for ratification.

### "We're With You, Boys, But—"

This was the method which had been employed in previous years, and the men had stood for it so long as a decent wage-increase was included. This time, however, true to their material interests, they would have none of these demands; no matter what the officials thought, they insisted on more wages.

It was plain from the first that the most "dangerous" element, from the official standpoint, was the Firemen's Branches of the International Seamen's

Union. The Marine Firemen were not only the most determined group, but the very strike itself depended upon them. If they came out, the sailors and stewards could not work; the ships would be tied up. The best way to see how anxious the officials were to keep the firemen from kicking over the traces, is to look over their arguments.

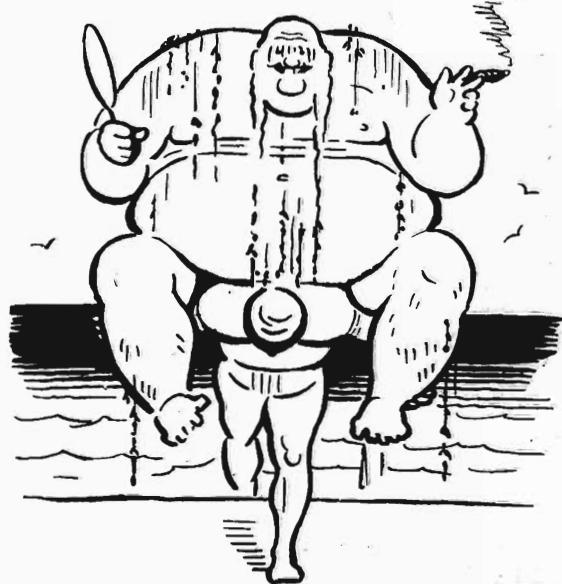
The men had to listen to the grand old hymn, "We're with you, boys, BUT the time is not opportune. There is no Branch of the International going to ask for a raise in wages at this critical period. The sailors are only putting in for a reduction in working hours, and this is not an advance in wages.... If the conditions justified it we would be only too pleased to go with you." One official of international repute, just back from Europe, had the nerve to say, that the difference between asking for an increase in wages, and asking for a reduction of working hours, was that *the shipowners would not be wise to what a reduction in working hours meant*, and therefore you could put something over on them!

This same officer, when he saw that a few Union officials were really in line with the desires of the men, threatened them with all sorts of disasters.

### Terrible Threats

The British Seamen's Union, he said, had refused to support him in his endeavor to get the great Seamen's Act embodied in the League of Nations Labor Charter—consequently if we go on strike now we'll be fighting the British Seamen's Union.

At this point, another political hack got up to explain that the Government, in the shape of the Shipping



*Good Morning  
Seamen! Stick to your agreement and let the ship-owner ride you another year.*

Board was the largest ship-owner, and we must not antagonize the Government—for the next Government might be Republican, and the glorious Seamen's Act would be wiped off the statute books. (In other words, you had better vote the Democratic ticket next time, or you'll be lost!)

Then the officials said that if the firemen went on strike without the support of the International, the strike would fail within three months—in plain English, hinting at scabbery. At this point some member of the rank and file had the audacity to ask why the firemen paid per capita tax to the International—when, as the officials said, the Union could do nothing with the International, and nothing without it?

#### Foreign Scabs and Patriotic Shipowners

But the greatest official Bogey was, "Remember, boys, the Latins—French, Portuguese, Spanish, Italians—will scab on you, and sure burst this Union which we have spent *your* money and *our* time to build."

Take particular note, fellow workers. The capitalist class and their agents have always tried to keep the workers divided, and the exciting of racial prejudice was always their trump-card. This and every other argument under the sun were used by the officials to try and keep the men from taking a mean advantage of the good, kind shipowners, who have always—and in most cases still do—fed the men at sea worse than prisoners in solitary in a penitentiary, and provided sleeping accomodations filthier and more uncomfortable than a ten-cent Bowery doss house.

We also heard the patriotic drums beat. America, said our "leaders," is trying to build a merchant marine, and if you men go for an advance in wages at this time, you will force the shipowners to give up the idea, as the cost of operation is too heavy—and the British shipowners will get it all their own way. One of the men suggested, in view of the fact that British seamen were asking for more wages than we were, and that Australian sailors wanted more money and a six-hour day, that if the official argument were logical, the best thing to do would be to turn over all our funds to the British seamen and help them get theirs; thereby making it so costly for British shipowners, that the American shipowners would get all the business, and good seamen in this country would get a glorious opportunity to work for less wages!

#### The Men Go Out Anyhow

When the men down in the bowels of the ship—the firemen, coal-passers, trimmers, etc.,—came on strike, their officers, the engineers, told them that if *any* strike-breakers were brought aboard the ships they would refuse to take the ships to sea. This act alone meant the breaking down of the old demarcation-line between the officers and their men below, and it was reflected in the attitude of the deck-officers, also.

Another interesting point about the strike is the way the Union officials rushed to get behind the men when they came out—and the way the officials connected with the Sailors' Locals of the International hurried to put in a demand for a wage-increase at the last minute, after having bitterly opposed wage-increases from the beginning. But there are men in the rank and file who fully understood that this was a belated attempt on the part of these gentlemen to justify their existence.

The Firemen's Local demanded a \$15 increase for all except the lowest grades, who were to get \$10, grades that came within the jurisdiction of their Union, and an alteration in certain working-conditions—such as, less fires to work for each man. This would give more men jobs.

#### How the Strike Finished

After the strike had been on for seventeen or eighteen days, the shipowners intimated to the Strike Committee that they had had enough, and were ready to give in about the wages. The changes in working-conditions were to be left to a Committee of Shipowners to confer with the Union and reach a settlement.

The Strike Committee immediately sent out the following telegram to all Branches:

"Conference with American Shipowners Association yesterday have agreed as follows: \$15 increase for all unlicensed men in engine room outside of wipers and passers, who get \$10. . . . Call special meeting at once find number of men in favor and those opposed as soon as possible. *We consider this a great victory.* The shipowners agree to give passes to all their docks to all Union officials, also agree to pay money due to men who left ships when strike was called. Working rules to be gone over by Committee. *Expect no trouble.* United States Shipping Board also agrees to working rules and wages paid by shipowners."

The telegram sent the men in the Branches back to work in quick time, under the impression that everything had been agreed. The wage-increase had been agreed, all right, but oh my! when the next meeting of the men was called, they were gently but firmly told that the only rules that were agreed to were those beneficial to the shipowners!

Remember. By this time the men were back at work, their morale was broken; as it always is temporarily in any strike, as soon as they go back. Nobody knows this better than the Boss, and nobody ought to know it better than the Trade Union official, who is hired to see through just such tricks.

In this case the working rules were more important than the wage-increase. *Even the granting of passes to Union officials was refused*, in spite of the telegram of the Strike Committee to the contrary.

#### The Firemen Sold

At the meeting where this report was made, the officials were very angry about this point. They declared they were going back to tell the shipowners that the men would not stand for their officials being refused admission to the decks. In regard to the things that were of importance to the men, such as less fires and more jobs—well, fellows, if you try to enforce these points it means strike again, and we all know that that is almost impossible just now!

The point to remember is, that if the Union officials did not realize that immediately the men were back at work without *all* their demands being definitely settled one way or another, the ship-owners would do as they liked, they were fools; and if the Union officials *did* know this, and did not bring it to the attention of the men, they were selling the men.

# Unionism in the Printing Trades

By Al Seamon

WHEN I first went to work in a printing office, the foreman sent me over to sweep up the the composing room. I looked at the filthy condition of the place, and right away I knew that something was the matter with the printers. I still have that feeling. Just as the printers of those days failed to see that they were being killed off by the germs from that filth and dust—so today the printers are being blinded and stupefied by the filth thrown out by their "leaders".

In the Printing Trades we have five International Unions, with five complete sets of officers; we are paying them five times as much money as we should, in order to maintain them in a style that becomes them as International officers. Some of them are very prominent in the Labor Movement.

### *Look 'em Over*

Mr. Matthew Woll, of the Photo Engravers, has been editing the *Federationist* in the absence of our beloved Samuel Gompers. If you want to know what he thinks about the trend of the Labor Movement, read the *Federationist*. He is against any democracy.

Mr. Marsden Scott, of the Typos, is famous for signing a ten-year agreement with the Publishers, and he doesn't think the Typos ought to get too familiar with the workers in the other trades of the industry—it tends to make the combs less conservative, and perhaps more willing to help the underdogs of the other Unions.

Mr. Berry of the Pressmen's organization needs no introduction to the workers. The Chicago Pressmen have accused the entire International Board of Directors of transferring moneys belonging to the pension fund to a Hydro-Electric company, owned and controlled by the families of Mr. Berry and one other member. This International is being continually split by secession, and just now almost all the largest Local Unions are on the outside looking in.

Mr. Freel of the Electrotypes is opposed to any movement that will give the rank and file any control over their own organization. His actions in various cities where Local Unions have taken the bit in their teeth proves this.

Mr. Reddick of the Bookbinders is a new johnny among the International presidents, and from all his actions, he is going to follow in the footsteps of the other "leaders" of the Printing Trades.

### *How They Buck the Rank and File*

This choice collection of Labor misleaders are doing their utmost to prevent the workers in the Printing Trades from getting a fair share (I do not say "an equal share") of what we produce.

In Rochester, N. Y., the printing workers agreed that they would all go to the employer together, and that all would stick until they got what they wanted. Many conferences were held; finally the Unions were compelled to strike for their demands.

One of the International officers ordered the men in his Union to return to work, threatening loss of charter, pension rights, death benefits and other penalties to those who didn't obey. The men weakened and re-

turned to work, with the usual result. The employers won. The action of the workers for their own protection was discouraged, and they were called all sorts of names. The minute you call a printer a "Bolshevik," you have him licked.

Then the Forty-four Hour Week began to be talked about. The Local Unions of New York City decided to give it a trial. They had all arranged their contracts to expire at the same time—October 1, 1919, and they thought it best to take the employers into their confidence. So they asked for a Conference, which was granted, and selected as their spokesman the President of "Big Six"—a very conservative head of a conservative organization. He told the employers that he realized that perhaps the employers could not grant an increase in wages on May 1st,—as the War Labor Board had arranged for.

"But we hereby serve notice on you," he said, "that the Forty-four Hour Week goes into effect on October 1st, 1919."

This all happened last April. A few weeks later, we hear that the five International presidents have met with a committee of the employers, and agreed to inaugurate the Forty-four Hour Week in May 1921—just two years later. This was not a sell-out of the workers—Oh no. It was the biggest sell-out any body of workers ever got.

### *Workers Scabbing on Workers*

The very form of the Printing Trades organizations—divided up into craft Unions—is detrimental to the workers. We boast that the strike is the greatest weapon in the hands of our movement. This may be so in other industries, but not in the printing trades.

We are told that it is not a crime to set type when the pressmen are out on strike. The pressman has been taught that it is all right to run his presses when the compositors are out. The stoppage of work in the composing or press room does not mean that the plate-maker will refuse to make plates for the scab pressman, or that the book-binder will refuse to bind printing that has been set up and printed by scabs.

### *The Way to Get Together*

Such is organization in our industry. We are beginning to wonder if we cannot do better by getting our rank and file to form shop-committees composed of all the crafts, to function through the committees, and in that way shut the International Unions out of the game if they cannot play in the One Big Union.

In New York City, at the present time, there is a movement on foot to knit together the twenty-two Local Unions in one compact body which will function under one head. This movement comes from the rank and file of the workers in the shop, and its rapid growth threatens the jobs of a considerable number of chair-warmers.

May there come a day when we, in the printing industry, will refuse even to set in type any attack on the Labor movement or its members in any part of the world. This can be done only through the One Big Union.

## The Voice of Labor

For Labor's organization by industries in the One Big Union.

Published twice a month by the Labor Committee of the National Left Wing

**Editor**.....*John Reed*  
**Manager**.....*Ben. Gitlow*

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43 West 29th Street, New York City.

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### How to Help

THIS paper is distributed by volunteer Committees organized in the shops by the workers themselves. Do you like it? Do you think it is worth while helping?

If you do, this is how you can help:

Organize a Committee in your shop—or among your fellow-workers; fellows you know are "all right"—even if there are only one or two of you. Get together and talk it over. Have a smoker, a lecture or some kind of an entertainment by which you can raise a little money. If you want speakers, write to us, or ask the local Left Wing organization to supply one.

With this money order a few hundred copies of *The Voice of Labor*, and distribute them to the workers *on the job*. If you can sell them, so much the better; if not, give them away.

Increase your Committee by adding to it other workers who are interested. Start new Committees in other shops.

Use these Committees to spread the ideas of Industrial Unionism. Make them the basis for Shop Committees which will control your jobs, which can deal with the bosses direct, without the interference of reactionary Union officials.

When you have several of these Committees in different shops, have them elect delegates to a Workers' Council. This is a start toward Industrial Unionism.

This is *your* paper. Write us articles. Criticize the paper. Ask for anything you want to know about, and we'll try to tell you. Get subscribers. Get people interested. It is up to you.

If the paper succeeds, we'll make it larger, publish pictures, and keep you thoroughly informed of what is *really* going on in the Labor Movement, both here and abroad.

## What's Going On

THE International Workers' Defense League, encouraged by the growing insistence of the rank and file of Organized Labor, upon some plan of concerted action to free, not only Tom Mooney, but all class war prisoners, is issuing an appeal to all Unions to declare a general one-day strike on October 8th to force the release of our fellow-workers in jail.

FIVE hundred thousand railroad shopmen, who did not like the dilatory tactics either of their Union Officials or of the United States Railroad Administration, went out on strike. Their president, B. M. Jewell, ordered them back to work on pain of being scabbed on—and at the same time talked vaguely about a strike on September 2. The men have gone back. There won't be any strike on September 2.

WE see that Mr. H. D. Knopp, head of the Meat Division of the Federal Bureau of Markets, says that the reason the cost of living is so high is that the people will buy expensive cuts of meat. Nobody, he says, will eat chuck steaks or roasts any more. "Mechanics and others whose salaries have been raised seem to acquire a sirloin or porterhouse taste. . . ."

Be careful, fellow-workers! You're spending too much on "luxuries."

DR. WILLIAM T. HORNADAY, chairman of the American Defense Society's Committee on Bolshevism—yes, the same gentleman who wrote a book approving of the lynching of Frank Little—has sent a letter to the Governors of 48 States concerning the Plumb Plan.

"We warn you to be prepared," says his letter, "and when the mobs of striking Bolsheviks begin to attack the train crews and to burn and loot strike them quickly and strike hard. You can undoubtedly rely upon the returned soldiers to stand with you for law and order. They do not believe in Bolshevism, and they hate the red flag of anarchy. Call upon them to help defend your state and your city from the mobs. They saved Seattle and Winnipeg, and they drove the red flag off the streets of New York."

Don't start anything you can't finish, doctor!

THE Italian Seamen's Federation has declared a boycott of all ships carrying munitions for the war against Soviet Russia. They have already forcibly seized and unloaded two British ships full of munitions for Denikin which put in at Italian ports. In their resolution they state:

"All the crews of the Italian steamers are disposed to go to prison or sink to the bottom of the harbor with their steamer rather than to allow themselves to contribute to the defeat of the Russian people's revolution."

"We are convinced that such a defeat would mean the defeat of Labor everywhere. We invite all other Labor organizations, especially seamen, to boycott all steamers chartered by international Capitalism against the Workers' International, which is massing now its Red vanguard on the battlefields of Revolutionary Russia."

**A**T the last convention of the Swedish Printing Trades, held in Stockholm, the body decided that henceforth the Printers would *refuse to set up or print any news that lied about the workers*. We look forward eagerly to the next convention of Big Six.

**T**HE *National Labor Journal* of Pittsburgh, Pa. which proclaims itself to be "Official Organ of the Pittsburgh Federation of Labor, Building Trades Council, Union Label Council," publishes in its August 15th issue a large picture and eulogy of Andrew Carnegie, entitled, "Great Philanthropist. Andrew Carnegie. Is Dead." Among other things it says:

"The life of the deceased millionaire bears with it lessons we all should heed. It shows the great possibilities of this country for the man of intellect who practices the virtues of industry, economy and thrift, and it, too, plainly shows that under existing laws the men of brains and energy who are able to see, and grasp the opportunity, can build themselves up to heights of financial success that enables them to command the adulation and respect of the world."

This was published in a *Labor paper*—in Pittsburgh! In Pittsburgh—with its bloody memories of Homestead and McKee's Rocks! In Pittsburgh—where at this moment the A. F. of L. is trying to organize the Steel Industry, and the workers are voting on a general strike.

Which is the *real* A. F. of L.? The Steel Organization Committee which promises to free the workers from economic slavery—or the *National Labor Journal*, which praises the dead Butcher of Homestead?

**M**EXICAN delegates to the recent Pan-American Labor Conference in New York, denounce the A. F. of L. and Samuel Gompers in particular, whom they accuse of having railroaded the Conference. J. De Borran, delegate of the workers of Tampico, Mexico, issued a statement to the *New York Call*.

"Let me begin by saying that the working people of Mexico are not in sympathy with the American Federation of Labor," says De Borran; "that they do not admit politics as the basis of the struggle; that they resent interference of any authority in their affairs; that they consider Gompers a mountebank, and that they do not believe in the grand words of liberty with which the powerful in America try to deceive the world."

**B**ECAUSE the officials of the Railroad Brotherhoods declared the Winnipeg Strike illegal, and ordered their members to scab on the strikers in that district, the Winnipeg railroad men have decided "never again to send one cent of per capita over the line."

By a vote of 8,841 to 705, fifty-one Winnipeg Unions have forever repudiated the A. F. of L., and affiliated with the One Big Union.

**A** REFERENDUM is now being taken among the A. F. of L. Local Unions in the State of Washington, to decide whether or not the workers in the Northwest will form One Big Union. This was ordered at the recent Convention of the State Federation of Labor.

**I**N Canada the Northwest Mounted Police are being used to terrorize the workers. Raids have been conducted upon the Labor Temple in Vancouver, B. C. and upon the headquarters of the Trades Council of Winnipeg—at which place the safe was dynamited and looted. Labor leaders are arrested without charge, and even ordinary workers' homes are broken into.

In Vancouver many workers are still on strike for recognition of the One Big Union. The A. F. of L. International officials are lined up with the bosses. The following extract from a letter shows what is going on:

"The International Boilermakers, with an original membership of 1,800, addressed the employers telling them of their desire to make their position clear, stating that at a special meeting their vote was 106 against the strike and 14 in favor. They begged that the bosses would assist them against the ramifications of the O. B. U. supporters, and in accordance with this plea the bosses have established organization bureaus at their gates, and demand that every one seeking employment must first sign, and swear allegiance to International organizations as represented by the American Federation of Labor."

**T**HE Workers' Council in the Waist and Dress Industry in New York, formed two months ago, now has more than 15,000 members. This Council is based on shop self-government, the election of Shop Committees which shall settle all local matters in the shop, and meet in general conference to adjust problems concerning the entire industry. They are, of course, bitterly opposed by the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, which has not hesitated to employ thugs.

We quote part of the Workers' Council's manifesto: "We, 320 Shop Delegates of the Waist and Dress Industry, at a Conference held at the People's House, 7 E. 15th Street, New York City, May 3rd and 4th, 1919, realize that Trade Unions, instead of bringing about class-consciousness and solidarity among the workers and uniting them against their exploiters, break them into craft groups and thereby weaken them and serve the interests of the employing class. We also realize that our emancipation from life-long drudgery depends entirely upon our solidarity and class-consciousness."

"We therefore proclaim to all the workers of the Waist and Dress Industry the inauguration of a Workers' Council."

"The Workers' Council sets out to educate and organize the workers along class conscious and industrial lines; to break the corrupt and demoralizing influence of craft-union officialdom; to have the workers ready to go on with production when the time comes for them to take over the industries."

**T**WO Conferences of Union men have been held recently in Australia—one at Sydney, the other at Melbourne—which decided by large majorities to send out ballots to all Local Unions for decision whether or not to form One Big Union. It is practically certain that nine-tenths of the Local Unions will join.

# Leave it to the Government

**C**ONGRESS has appropriated \$1,750,000—we suppose from the last Liberty Loan—to pay the Secret Service to snoop around for profiteers.

This is nothing but a bluff. The Government knows perfectly well who the profiteers are—the big profiteers. Only a few weeks ago there was a Congressional Investigation of the Packers, at which Francis Heney predicted that the Meat Trust would control the entire food supply of the United States in five years. The Government has announced its intention to “dissolve” the Meat Trust—presumably just the same way the Standard Oil Company was dissolved—in place of one great profiteer, a dozen or more small ones.

Already tons upon tons of food have been discovered in warehouses and cold storage plants. The War Department, discovered hoarding vast supplies on its own account, has been forced by the attacks of Republican politicians to sell these supplies to the people through the Post Offices and schools. Meanwhile, retail dealers by the score are being arrested and indicted and fined.

This will not materially lower the cost of living. A few small retailers, squeezed from the top by the great corporations, are made the goats; but it is the great corporations who are to blame—the Meat, Coal and Milling industries, and behind these the great financial groups, like J. P. Morgan and Co. We may be sure that the Secret Service will not find these profiteers.

## Nothing To Be Done

The system of production under which we live—Capitalism—is based on profiteering. Private interests control all the necessities of life, and, dominating industry, rule millions of workers’ lives like kings. From time to time certain profiteers become too outrageous, and the Government prosecutes them, and all the capitalist papers raise a hymn of praise to the authorities, and the blessings of democratic Government. This Governmental “activity” is for the purpose of convincing the workers that something is being done, and diverting their attention from the *real* criminal—the capitalist system.

Meanwhile, the cost of living goes up and up, and wages fall more and more behind.

According to President Wilson, nothing can be done about it just now. In his message to Congress of August 8, he said:

“There can be no settled conditions here or elsewhere until the Treaty of Peace is out of the way, and the work of liquidating the war has become the chief concern of our Government and of the other Governments of the world. Until then business will inevitably remain speculative, and sway now this way and again that, with heavy losses and heavy gains, as it may chance, and the consumer must take care of both the losses and the gains.”

We call the attention of American workers to what the Italian workers did in such circumstances. In every city in Italy the workers seized the food and

other necessities on sale in private stores, and distributed them to the people.

## For Heaven’s Sake Don’t Strike!

The President goes on:

“With the increase in the prices of the necessities of life come demands for increases in wages—demands which are justified if there be no other means of enabling men to live. Upon the increase in wages there follows close an increase in the price of the products whose producers have been accorded the increase—not a proportionate increase, for the manufacturer does not content himself with that—but an increase considerably greater than the added wage cost, and for which the added wage cost is oftentimes hardly more than an excuse. The laborers who do not get an increase in pay are likely to strike, and the strike only makes matters worse. It checks production, it affects the railways, it prevents distribution and stops the markets, so that there is presently nothing to buy, and there is another excessive addition to prices resulting from the scarcity. . . .

“We must, I think, frankly admit that there is no complete immediate remedy to be had from legislative and executive action. . . .”

What this means is that the profiteers raise prices until the workers cannot live on their wages; they strike, and get higher wages—but the manufacturer only charges the higher wages to the public, with a little bit more.

This shows an almost infantile lack of knowledge of economics on the President’s part. The outworn theories defended in this message were exploded by Karl Marx in 1865. In “Value, Price and Profit,” Marx showed that the worker is robbed of labor power *at the job*—and that increases in price are *not* based upon wage-increases, nor do increases in prices follow wage-increases; they precede them.

So, says the President, workmen *musn’t* strike. It only makes things worse. If they don’t strike, they’ll starve to death—and if they do, they’ll also starve to death. Meanwhile the Government can’t do anything.

## Profiteers Must Remain

What’s the answer? The profiteers must be got rid of. But hold on, says Mr. Wilson:

“We cannot hastily and overnight revolutionize all the processes of our economic life. We shall not attempt to do so.”

Since the “economic life” under which we live is based on the exploitation of the many by the few, this simply means that we shall not get rid of profiteers.

And there must be no strikes.

“The worst thing, the most fatal thing, that can be done now is to stop or interrupt production, or to interfere with the distribution of goods by the railways and shipping of the country. We are all involved in the distressing results of the high cost of living, and we must unite, not divide, to correct it. . . . Threats and undue insistence upon the interest of a single class make settlement impossible”

In other words, the interest of the working class, the vast majority of the American people, must not be mentioned. The interest of the capitalist class,

however, is "something else again," and the President shows that it is for this class he speaks.

"And, if only in our own interest, we must help the people overseas. *Europe is our biggest customer.* We must keep her going or thousands of our own shops and scores of our own mines will close. There is no such thing as letting her go to ruin without ourselves sharing in the disaster."

The President doesn't want to "help the people" of Russia; he wants to help the capitalist of Russia, where the workers have got rid of their profiteers, and run the industries themselves, for their own benefit. Capitalist Europe is our "biggest customer"—the American capitalist's biggest customer. American manufacturers keep up the prices of products at home by selling their surplus in Europe—often cheaper than in this country. If Europe is not "kept going"—that is to say, if the European workers take over their own industries—then this condition will inevitably spread to other countries, until the capitalist system is overthrown all over the world. Sooner than permit this, our "patriotic" American business men will shut down "thousands of our shops and scores of our mines."

#### Burning Up Army Supplies

If America really wanted to help "the peoples overseas"—or even our own people—why have thousands of tons of Army supplies been burned up in France—supplies paid for by the people of this country in order to wage the War for Democracy, and which could have been sold to the French workers at cost?

The Glasgow (Scotland) *Evening News* of June 21, 1919, carries the following news item, quoted by *The Worker* of July 5th:

"The Paris correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* records a striking instance of the mad greed by which profiteers are arming every wild anarchist with arguments. The American Army in France is left, at the

end of the war, with 100,000 motor vehicles, mostly little worn, and with *huge stores of unused provisions, clothing and boots.*

All these things are *bitterly needed by would-be French buyers.* The motors in particular, would be invaluable in helping to set industry going again and in supplying the other transport urgently needed in the devastated districts. The Americans, who have no marine transport to spare, are willing to sell. But the French motor manufacturers, though *gorged like those of the other belligerent countries with war profits*, have not been ashamed to procure from the French Government a veto on any sale of the American goods to private French purchasers, and a refusal by the French Government to buy them itself. Accordingly, the motor vehicles are now being *burnt wholesale* that the war profiteers of the French motor trade may exploit to the full the distresses of their countrymen, and incidentally inflict a serious loss on France's American Allies."

#### What's The Answer?

The French profiteers objected—and so we gave in to the French profiteers, who, as in all capitalist countries, control their Government.

Finally, notice the last sentence in this pregnant paragraph of the President's speech. "*There is no such thing as letting her go to ruin without ourselves sharing in the disaster.*"

This means simply that if Capitalism breaks down in Europe, it will break down in America too. When Capitalism breaks down—as it inevitably must—then the working class comes into power. This is called the Social Revolution. The workers of Europe are already preparing to take over industry; the American workers must get ready.

With the workers in control, there will be no reason to close down the shops and mines, for there will be no private profits to be made, and no dividends to pay, and no burning of supplies or halting of production to line the pockets of profiteers.



"I Gorry, I'm tired!"

"There you go! You're tired! Here I be a-standin' over a hot stove all day, an' you workin' in a nice cool sewer!"

# Shop Committees in the Amalgamated

By B. Gitlow

(Note—The writer does not intend this article as a blanket indorsement of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers. With certain features of the organization he is not in accord. But in this article are presented its most admirable features, which can serve as a model for the workers in many other industries in this country.)

ONE of the largest and most powerful labor organizations in the United States is the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America. Several years ago, a few clothing workers in New York became disgusted with the reactionary tactics and corrupt leadership of the United Garment Workers—an A. F. of L. organization—and broke away, forming the Amalgamated. In its early days the new Union bitterly fought the scaberry of the United on one hand, and the brutality of the bosses on the other.

It grew rapidly. In a short time the Amalgamated accomplished a great deal. The conditions of the workers steadily improved. Sweat-shop conditions were wiped out, and hours reduced.

The Amalgamated was the first Union in the country to declare for the Forty-four Hour Week. Forty thousand of its members struck for fourteen long weeks in order to get the Forty-four Hour Week. In all that two months and a half there was not a single desertion from the Union ranks.

#### How the Shops are Controlled

In the Amalgamated Clothing Workers the shops are controlled by the workers on the job, through Shop Committees.

**Size.** The Shop Committee is as large as the workers want it to be; sometimes three, sometimes four or five. Then there is a Shop Chairman, who is a member of the Committee.

**Election of Committee.** The Committee and the Chairman are elected by the workers from their number.

**Length of holding office.** The Shop Committee holds office as long as the workers want them to serve. I have seen Shop Committees recalled and others elected three times in one month, because the workers in the shop didn't like the way they were handling affairs.

**Pay.** The Committee and Chairman get no pay. They work on the job with the rest of the workers they represent.

The duty of the Shop Chairman is to see that the Union rules are enforced, and to look after the interests of the workers in the shop. The Shop Committee guides the Chairman, and acts with him in shop affairs.

During the war, the cutting departments of several uniform shops were managed by the workers through their Shop Committee. There was neither foreman nor boss; their places were filled by the Chairman and the Committee, who directed all the work from the beginning to the end, thus demonstrating that organized workers have the ability to run industry themselves.

Whenever questions come up which cannot be settled by the Shop Committee and the Chairman to

the satisfaction of the workers, a shop meeting is called in Union headquarters right after working hours. The only reason that the meeting is not held in the shop, is that the boss will always try to be on the job in his own place, to find out what the workers are thinking and planning.

#### The Union Hires the Workers

The Amalgamated maintains that the hiring of workers is the job of the Union. It holds that the labor power of the workers is the property of the workers' organization, and that the organization should dispose of that power to the workers' best advantage.

The majority of workers in industry must ask the boss for an opportunity to work. Generally, after making out the employment application—in which the worker must give his whole family and business history from birth—he interviews the boss, who finally decides whether to give him the job or not. The boss fixes the hours of work, the amount of wages, and the conditions as a whole.

Not so with the members of the Amalgamated. The Union fills all jobs. When a job is open, a worker is sent to that job by the Union. *Any member found soliciting a job from a boss is punished by the organization.*

The worker who is to get the job is given a working card by the business agent. On the card appears only the worker's name, the Local he belongs to, the job he is to get and the amount of wages he is to receive. When the worker gets this card he goes to the shop, and hands the card to the Shop Chairman, who immediately puts him to work. No question about his experience; no question about his family; no question about recommendations. The only thing the boss gets about the worker is his name and address. After working two weeks on the job, *the boss cannot fire the worker*—because the Union holds that two weeks time is sufficient to prove whether or not the worker can handle the job.

All complaints in the shop must be made by the boss to the Shop-Chairman who, with the Shop Committee, has full charge of affairs. Being a committee of the workers, in most cases the Shop Committee takes the workers' side.

#### If The Boss Doesn't Like It

The Shop Chairman and the Shop Committee have a good deal of initiative in their own shop. In most Unions the scale of wages represents the maximum amount of wages the worker gets. In the Amalgamated, it always represents the *minimum*; most workers get more than the scale, and none get less than the scale. This condition depends upon the initiative and intelligence of the Shop Chairman and Shop Committees. If a Shop Chairman or Shop Committee understands the labor market and the forces at work

# The British Shop Steward Movement

By George Ellery

**W**HAT is known as the "Shop Steward Movement" in Great Britain is merely the machinery by which the rank and file of the organized workers have taken control of the Labor movement.

The name "Shop Stewards" is not new in British industry. Before the War the agents for the regular Trade Union Branches—like our Local Unions in this country—were called Shop Stewards. But the present movement has no connection with the old Union Shop Stewards.

The Shop Stewards are now elected by all the workers of every trade in each shop or plant, and are assisted by a Shop Steward's Committee, composed of delegates from each trade.

#### *Shop Stewards Vs Trade Unionism*

Of course this form of organization is directly opposed to the Trade-Unionism characteristic of British—as well as American—Organized Labor. Trade-Unionism is based upon the division of the workers into crafts, with the skilled workers in a preferred position; its aim is simply to attempt to regulate wages to keep up with the cost of living, and ultimately, to secure for Labor a voice in the determination of his job.

The Shop Steward movement, however, demands more than that. Its immediate aim is self-government for the workers, both in the shop and throughout industry; its ideal is the *abolition of capitalist production*, and the control of industry by the workers. In the Labor movement, it stands for the breaking down of craft-lines, organization by shop and industry, instead of by trade, and direct election and control of Union officials.

#### *British Labor and Politics*

The War undoubtedly gave birth to the Shop Steward movement, but the causes for it existed long be-

in the Labor movement, they can always take advantage of an opportunity to gain more for the workers of their particular shop.

Due to the effective organization of the shops as outlined above, the bosses during a strike face a well-disciplined army of workers, not a mob. The Shop Chairmen and Shop Committees marshal the workers of their particular shops, see that picket duty is attended to, and stop work from being sent out of town.

#### *The Power of the Amalgamated*

The power and strength of the Amalgamated lies in their Shop Chairmen and Shop Committees. If properly attended to by the workers the Shop Committee is one of the workers' most effective weapons against the capitalist class.

In the near future the workers of this country are going to come to grips with the master class for possession of industry. When a Workers' Government comes into power, will the workers be able to renew and efficiently run industry for the benefit of the working class? The answer lies in the effective organization of Shop Committees in all branches of industry—Committees composed of men who are intelligent and class-conscious.

fore. For the past twenty years British Labor leaders had been absorbed in politics. The British Labor Party was built up on the idea that *the workers can acquire economic power through electing Labor men to Parliament*. The Labor Party was very successful—successful to such an extent that at the outbreak of the War there was a powerful Labor delegation in Parliament; but at the same time, British Labor was economically weaker than before. The capitalists gained colossal wealth, but Labor fell more and more behind. The elections of 1910 made it seem as if the Labor Party would soon be all-powerful in Parliament—but it soon became evident that parliamentary action would not help.

British Labor, like American Labor, has swung periodically backward and forward between political and industrial action. The recurring movement toward industrial action, which was expressed in the formation of the Triple Alliance of Miners, Railwaymen and Transport Workers shortly before the War, was still in full swing when the War broke out.

#### *How the War Smashed the Unions*

Also the development of modern industry, with its subdivisions of crafts, and its methods of speeding-up, produced the same tendency toward Industrial Unionism that has been evident in this country. And as in America, the reactionary form of Trade-Union organization, and the reactionary policies of the Trade-Union officials, placed the workers at a disadvantage, and actually held them back.

At the beginning of the War, the British Government found that it was necessary above all things to get increased production, which was prevented by Trade-Union rules and regulations, made to protect Labor by limiting hours of work. The Government thereupon called in the Labor "leaders," and asked them to give up all Union privileges for the duration of the War.

The Government solemnly promised that all Union rules and practices should be completely restored when peace came. "Any departure during the war from the practice and ruling in the workshops, shipyards and other industries prior to the war, shall be only for the period of the war, and must be absolutely and completely reinstated when the war is over." Thus said the Munitions Act.

By the Treasury Agreement of March, 1915, the Unions, through their officials, renounced all the essential features of Trade-Unionism; shop rules and regulations, Union practices, *even the right to strike*.

#### *The Importance of Labor*

In return, the Government invited the Trade Unions to cooperate with it in making munitions and supplies. Trade Union officials formed part of Munitions Boards, sat upon Government Commissions and Tribunals, and were treated with the greatest respect. In time of crisis the Government discovered that the industrial workers were of supreme importance; while on the other hand, the capitalists proved themselves practically incapable of managing industry. In many cases the Government was compelled to take over

industries—just as in this country, the bad management of the railroads forced the Government to assume control.

But all this power and glory, while it strengthened the self-respect of the workers, did not make them *economically* more powerful. As a matter of fact, the rank and file, deprived of all safeguards, were driven at frightful speed.

#### *Officials Against the Workers*

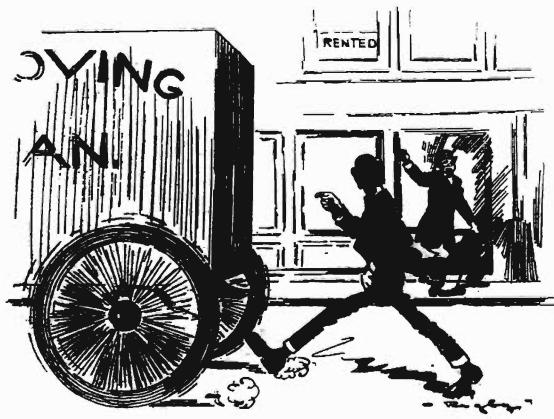
At first, bewildered by the new conditions and the patriotic *clap-trap* of the capitalist press, the workers submitted. Before long, however, they began to wake up to the fact that the slowly-accumulated gains of half a century had been swept away. Women poured into industry; "dilution" grew by leaps and bounds—the same process that went on among the Machinists of Bridgeport, Conn., whereby unskilled men were taught to do each one part of a skilled man's job, and so replaced the skilled men at lower wages; conscription came, munitions legislation, which made the workers almost serfs, then conscription of labor.

At first all these demands were indignantly rejected by Labor. Yet, supported by the Trade Union leaders, the Government was able to put them through.

#### *Resentment of the Rank and File*

The resentment of the British workers grew and grew, accumulating not so much against the Government as against the Trade Union leaders. Deprived of the support of their Unions, the workers, driven to the wall, developed their own form of resistance—the Shop Stewards and Shop Stewards Committees.

Moreover, there was another cause for the new form of organization. British industry had developed more in three or four years than in the preceding thirty. The removal of Trade Union restrictions, also, had changed the very face of the Labor movement. The women workers and the "dilutees" robbed of their old meaning the words "skilled" and "unskilled." Union jurisdictional disputes were suspended, and new industrial classifications, unclassified, grew more and more numerous. Deprived of their old-time Union rules and guideposts, the workers became more and more a mass, a class united on the job. In the stress and storm of everyday work Labor was adapting itself to the new conditions, seeking new weapons, developing its own ideas and its own leaders from the rank and file.



"Where are you going?"  
"Somebody's moving. Maybe I'll find a flat!"

#### *The Workers Begin to Move*

In the spring of 1917, in spite of the prohibition of strikes, a number of important walk-outs took place. These were the "disturbances" mentioned in dispatches to the American newspapers, which were described as strange movements, without adequate demands. In fact, nobody understood what was happening. The Trade Union officials hastened to the disturbed areas and ordered the workers back—and the workers refused to go back! The Government became alarmed. It arrested strike committees and leaders; it appealed; it threatened; but the unrest grew. A Government Commission was appointed to investigate—and it was then that the world discovered that the British workers didn't give a tinker's damn about the restoration of Trade Union rules. Labor was going in a new direction—toward industrial control.

Out of this investigation, in the fall of 1917, came the appointment of the Whitely Commission, which proposed the establishment of local Industrial Councils, composed partly of workers and partly of capitalists, to administer industry. But the workers were not satisfied with the Whitely Council.

In November, 1917, the Shop Steward Movement first appeared in all its power, in the munitions-strike at Coventry. The object of the strike was to get recognition for the Shop Stewards' Committees of the various works in the district. The demand was first made in a single plant, at which there had been much disturbance. It was refused by the management, on the ground that the employers were then negotiating with the Trade Union officials for recognition of the Unions. Within a week there was a general strike throughout Coventry. The Government was very much alarmed, because the vital aeroplane industry was tied up. The consequence was that the Machinists won their Shop Steward recognition. Since then Shop Steward strikes have been pulled off all over England, controlled by the rank and file in the shops, with astonishing success... These strikes were bitterly fought by the Trade Union machines and leaders.

#### *The Bitter Struggle.*

At the present time the struggle between the Trade Unions and the Shop Steward Committees is very bitter. The Trade Union officials are supported by the British Premier and the Tory Parliament against the rank and file.

Lloyd George's speech in the House of Commons on "Labor unrest", condemned the Shop Steward movement very strongly, declaring that it was a "sedulous attempt to undermine confidence in Trade Union leaders." The Government is spending a great deal of time studying "how to re-establish the authority of the Trade Unions."

But just as in America, the Trade Union system is dying. Industry has changed, life has altered, the A. F. of L. and the British Trade Union Congress are slowly giving way; to Shop Stewards and Industrial Unionism in England, to Shop Committees and the One Big Union movement here.

Labor's political party in England has proved its powerlessness to change the economic system in Parliament. The American Labor Party, just organized on the same lines, will be able to exercise even less influence in Congress.

It is on the industrial field that Labor will take over the control of industry.

## Some Contract...

The A. F. of L. "leaders" are always shouting about "agreements" and how necessary they are.

When you want to go on strike, there's generally an "agreement" there to stop you. The "agreement" is very popular with the Bosses.

The International Carpenters' Union is an insurgent group which has broken away from the Brotherhood and begun the organization of an industrial Union of all wood-workers, which is governed by the workers themselves.

They are just winning their first strike in New York City, which was for recognition of the Union and for \$7 a day pay—*while the regular "Union scale" of the Brotherhood ranges from \$5.75 to \$6.50 per day*.

Out of fifty-odd places on strike in New York, forty-one, employing about 2,000 men, have signed the following agreement:

THIS AGREEMENT, made this day, the.....th of .....in the year....., by and between .....located.....hereinafter called the Employer and the International Carpenters' Union, hereinafter called the Union.

The Employer agrees from now on to pay all Woodworkers in his employ *not less* than seven dollars (\$7.00) for eight hours work.

Eight hours shall constitute a day's work on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. On these days the working hours shall be between the hours of 8 A. M. and 5 P. M.

On Saturday the working hours shall be between the hours of 8 A. M. and 12 o'clock noon.

All work done before or after the aforesigned hours, shall be considered as over time and shall be paid double time, at the rate of one dollar and seventy-five cents (\$1.75) per hour.

No work shall be done on Saturday afternoon, on legal holidays or at over time without the consent of the Union.

The Employer agrees to recognize a Shop Committee, elected from and by the men working in the shop or on the job. All grievances shall be first submitted to said Shop Committee.

The Employer also recognizes the International Carpenters' Union and shall permit the Committee of the Union to enter the premises where Woodworkers are employed.

Any man who is hired as a Woodworker shall be entitled to one day's wages and if discharged before he performs a full day's work, he shall receive not less than one day's pay.

No man shall be discharged between the hours of 8 A. M. and 4.30 P. M., nor on Saturday between 8 A. M. and 11.30 A. M.

Any Woodworker hired by the employer must declare his intention to join the Union on the first day he begins to work and must become a member of the Union within one week.

No discrimination shall be used against any member of the International Carpenters' Union for Union or strike activity.

For the International Carpenters' Union.  
.....  
Union.

Some agreement, eh?

Notice carefully: *The Employer promises everything, the Worker promises nothing!*

The agreement doesn't say *how long* the contract runs. The worker can strike again whenever conditions warrant it. The Employer, on the other hand, has got to employ only Union men.

One employer, just before signing, said, "Why, you fellows don't agree to do *anything*!"

"O yes we do," said the chairman of the Committee, "We promise to *work*!"

## Newspaper Reporters Too

By PYE.

AT last the reporters of America have made a real start in the direction not only of improving their own condition as paid workers, but also ultimately revolutionizing the character of the news that goes into the capitalist press. Probably no movement in the country has been more spontaneous than this sudden awakening of newspaper workers throughout the country.

According to the latest available advices, Boston, St. Louis, Seattle, Salt Lake and Butte, Montana, have perfected real organizations of the newspaper writers. While the plan and purpose of these organizations differ somewhat in details, the final outcome hoped for is a hog-tight, battling One Big Union of all the workers who make the newspapers, extending country wide and influencing in ways that now seem incredible the conduct and contents of the American press.

### St. Louis Leads.

The writer is more particularly familiar with what has been accomplished in St. Louis. He has seen the attitude of the boys in the newspaper offices there changed over night. The organization in St. Louis is hardly more than two weeks old, but it has already become an effective weapon which has made the local owners and managers wince perceptibly. Indeed they have lost a great deal of their old time complacent bossism. The leading officers of the St. Louis Association of Journalists are determined to stop at nothing, in their efforts to establish the professional character of the newswriter; to exert pressure necessary to enforce the publication of honest news; to influence favorably the quality of writing in the news and finally, but by no means least, to enforce a decent standard of pay.

When last heard from the St. Louis association had forced the reinstatement of four members of the staff of a morning paper, who had been discharged because they had joined the organization. It had forced the publication of an article criticizing a popular municipal undertaking after the article had been "killed" by a chief editor. One newspaper chapter of the five chapters comprising the organization, had presented a memorial to the proprietors demanding an increase of thirty per cent. in all departments of the writing and art staff. The association had unionized members throughout the newspapers, including everybody from the cub to the cartoonist, from the editorial paragraphers to the leg men. They will probably follow the example of the Boston reporters, and affiliate with Organized Labor.

# My Own Shop

## Slaving for the New York Interborough

By Patrick —

**I** AM a conductor on the —th Street street-car line. At the barn where I turn in the nickles we have two unions—the Amalgamated Street and Electric Railways Employees, and the Brotherhood of Interborough Employees. If you are a member of the former you get fired, if you are not a member of the latter you are liable to get fired—for not washing!

The Brotherhood is a real union; it started as a result of the great street car strike of 1915. The bosses started it. The men were striking for recognition of the Amalgamated, increased pay, shorter hours, etc. So the bosses thought to themselves: "Well if the men want a Union, they have a right to have a Union, and as Capital and Labor are partners, we must help them get it...."

### Some Strike!

Recently the Brotherhood pulled off a strike, and believe me, it was some strike. The Elevated and Subways were tied up tight as a drum and we fellows on the street cars didn't have to quit work for a single hour. There never was such a strike in New York. The Labor leaders could learn something from our strike. Not a wheel turned on either the Elevated or Subway lines for two days—except the wheels that carried enough cars to keep the city franchise. No arrests were made—why, there wasn't so much as a picket seen during the whole two days.

This strike was very different than the ordinary strike. It was called by the Brotherhood president on the Company's private wire. The Amalgamated offered to supply enough men to run the cars, just to prove it was a fake strike, and the Company refused. Under cover of the strike the Company fired about sixty men for belonging to the Amalgamated Union.

### An Eight-hour Day

I have not yet got a "regular run." This means that I get told each day what run I must take. I fill in when some fellow gets sick. Each morning I report for work at five o'clock and sit in the barn until I am called by the starter. Some mornings I get out by seven o'clock, and other mornings I sit around till nine; then the starter says I can go for the day. But a conductor or motor-man only gets paid while he is actually on the car, so on these days I get nothing. We are now getting 60 cents an hour, when we work.

For the men who have regular runs it is of course better. A man gets a regular run after about three months. But he gets last pick, and the runs at the bottom of the list are "long swing" runs, which means that they only go out in the rush hours. For instance, the fellow above me got a regular run a few days ago. He starts at 4.45 in the morning and works till 8 o'clock. By the time he gets his money and transfers "turned in" it is nearly 9 o'clock; he is then free until 12.30 p. m., when he goes on again and works for about an hour. He then "swings" until about 6 o'clock. From 6 o'clock he works until about 8.30 and he is finished for the day. For this day's work he

gets 8 hours pay. If there has been an accident or a long delay he has to make out a report, which usually takes him about an hour. But he only gets paid for the time actually spent on the car. If the time spent is 7 hours and 35 minutes he gets 8 hours pay.

### Seeing the Boss

In each barn there is a glass case in which a list of men who are to see the boss in the morning is posted.

After waiting your turn you are finally admitted to the boss. Without looking up the growls: "What's your badge?" (A street-car man is only a number).

"X—" you reply.

After rustling through some papers he turns to you: "At 9 a. m. on Monday on a north bound run, at the corner of —th Street and —th Avenue, you accepted a transfer that was out of date. What have you got to say?"

You say whatever you think will get by, for of course you can't remember what happened at that place, at that time, on that particular day.

"What do y' think this company's operatin' for? You'll be takin' cigar-coupons next. Two days on the list, and the next time you come in here you'll be laid off."

Two days on the list means that for the next two days you report at 5 a. m. wait around for four or five hours, and if not wanted are told to go home—thus losing two days' pay.

Conductors and motor-men have to buy their own uniforms, from a store designated by the company. The uniforms cost around \$18. A conductor has to "break in" for two weeks, and a motor-man usually takes six weeks before he is pronounced competent. During the breaking in period the recruit gets no wages.

### The Silver Lining

The system of spying which prevails on the New York street railway system would make the Kaiser green with envy. The only way to get by is to assume that everybody is a stool-pigeon. Motor-men spy on their conductors, conductors spy on their motor-men. Men and women passengers are in the company's employ and ride around for the purpose of spying. These plain-clothes spotters present bad transfers to the conductor, try to get past the box without paying a fare, enter into arguments for the purpose of trying to get the conductor annoyed, in order that he may insult them. They go to the front of the car and talk to the motor-man; if he answers back he is reported for talking while running the car.

But every cloud has a silver lining. The Interborough is not at all bad. It publishes a nice magazine which is distributed free. If one is a good employee he may get his name in print. If he has helped during a trying period, such as a strike, he may even get his photograph in the paper. If he has more children than any other man on the division then very probably the whole family will get its picture in the paper.